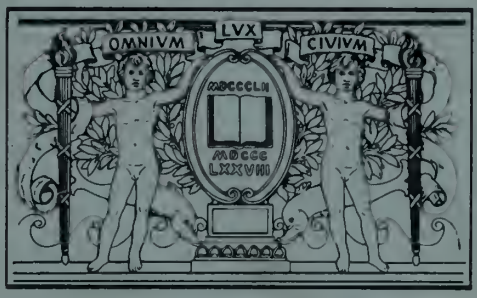
The Midnight Ghost

by Carol Beach York

illustrated by Charles Robinson

I can't see you

Timothy



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About the Book

Strange sounds in the night, mud in his shoe, and a trail of white footprints add up to Andrew's hardest case: The Mystery of the Midnight Ghost.

Can *anyone* catch a ghost? You can bet that Andrew will try!

Soft, spooky illustrations by Charles Robinson follow the suspects, clues, and Andrew's nighttime adventures to their surprising conclusion in Carol Beach York's humorously satisfying mystery for beginning readers.

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Coward, McCann & Geoghegan Inc.

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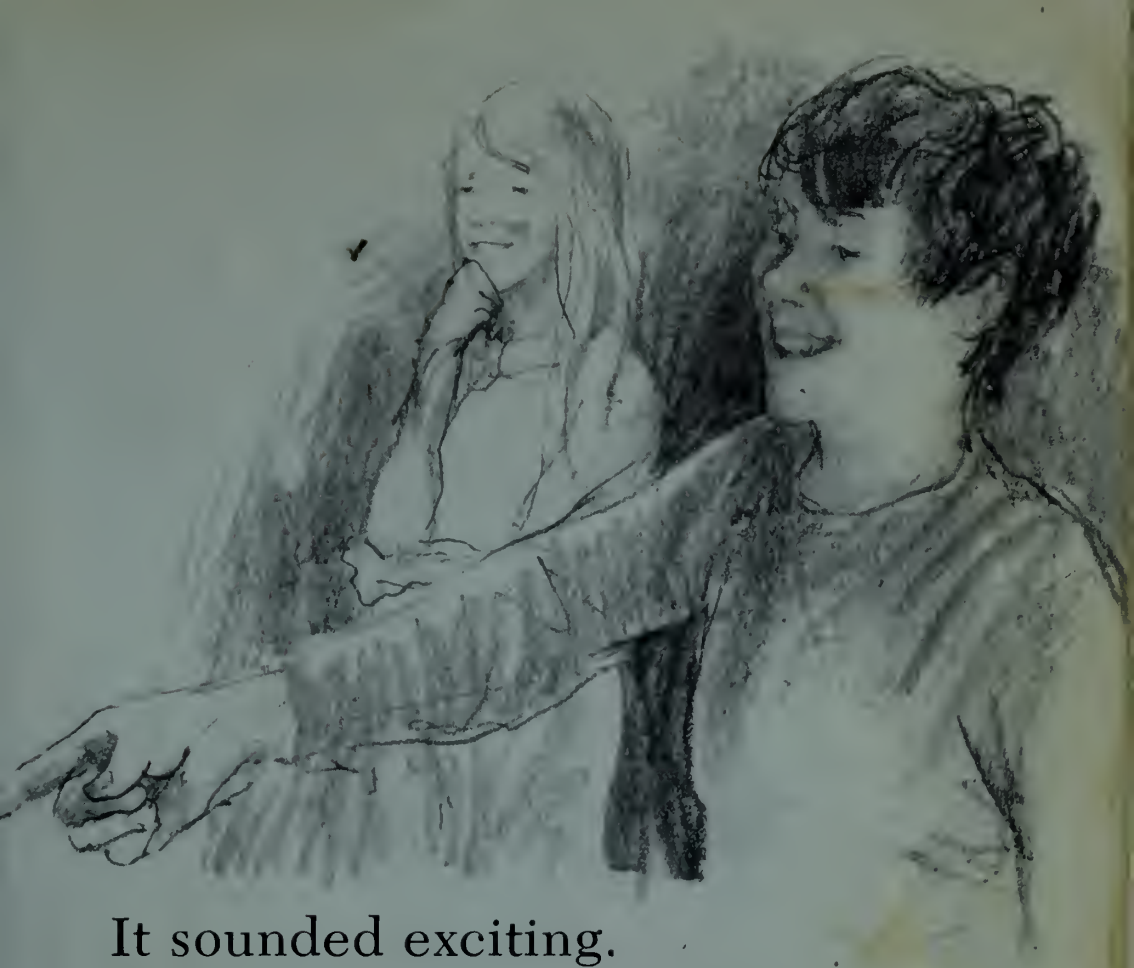
To my friends,
Jean and David Ely
and their boys,
Billy, Ricky, and Danny

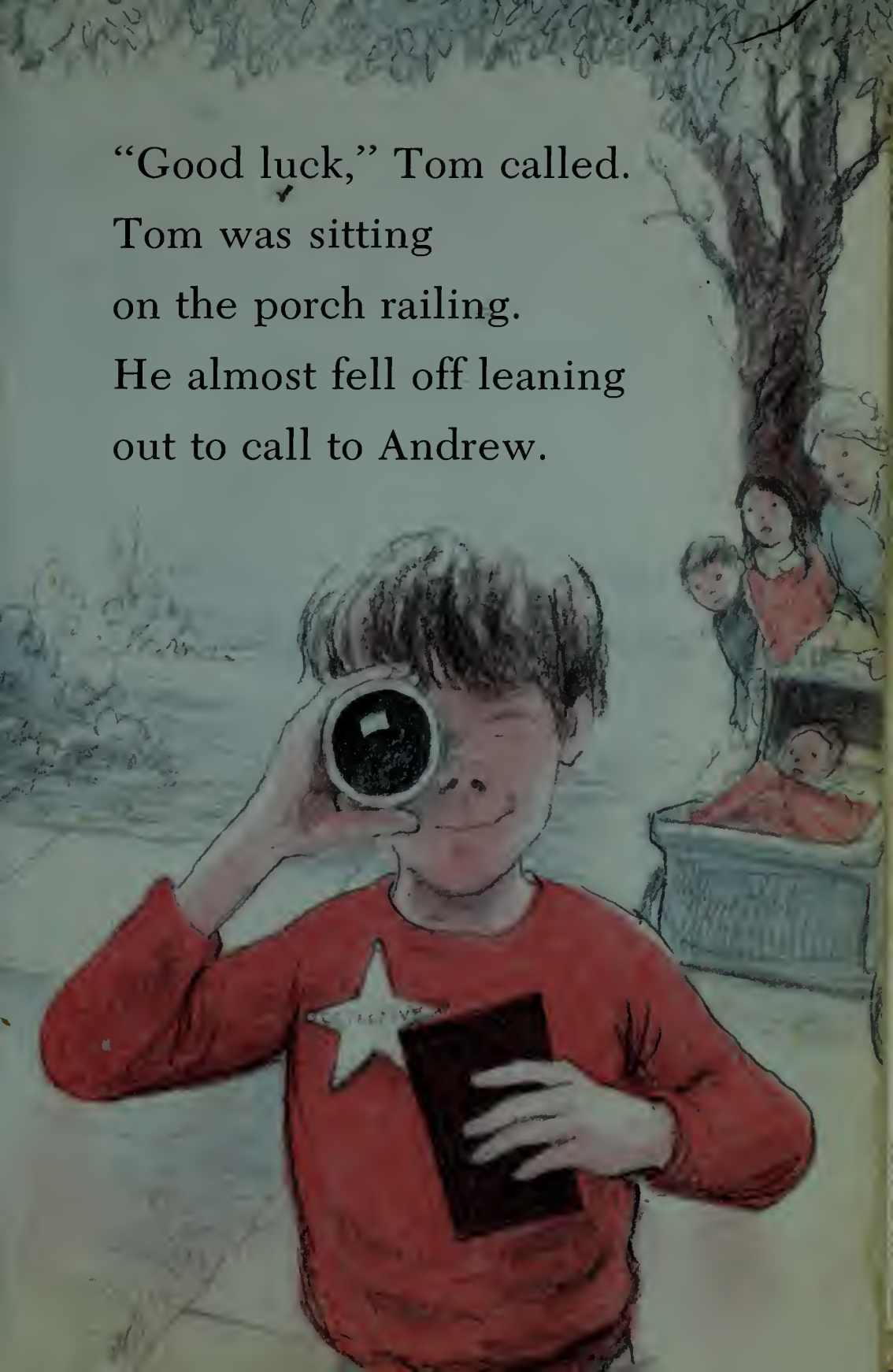
When Andrew was eight years old,
Aunt Emmy came for a visit.
She brought Andrew a present
for his birthday.
It was a very special present.
There was a shiny gold badge
with DETECTIVE
printed on it.
There was a small black notebook.
And a long, thin spyglass.

"Now you are all set to solve
some mysteries," Aunt Emmy said.
She pinned the gold badge
on Andrew's shirt.
"When you find some clues,
write them down in your notebook."
Andrew listened carefully.



It sounded exciting.
Andrew's sister, Elizabeth, said
the badge was very pretty, but
she asked, "What makes *you* think
you can be a detective?"
Andrew's brother, Tom, laughed.
"Where are *you* going to find
any mysteries to solve?"

"I'll find some,"
Andrew said boldly.
"Of course you will,"
Aunt Emmy said.
"The world is full of mysteries."
Andrew took his black notebook.
And the long, thin spyglass.
With the badge pinned to his shirt,
he started off down the street
looking for a mystery.



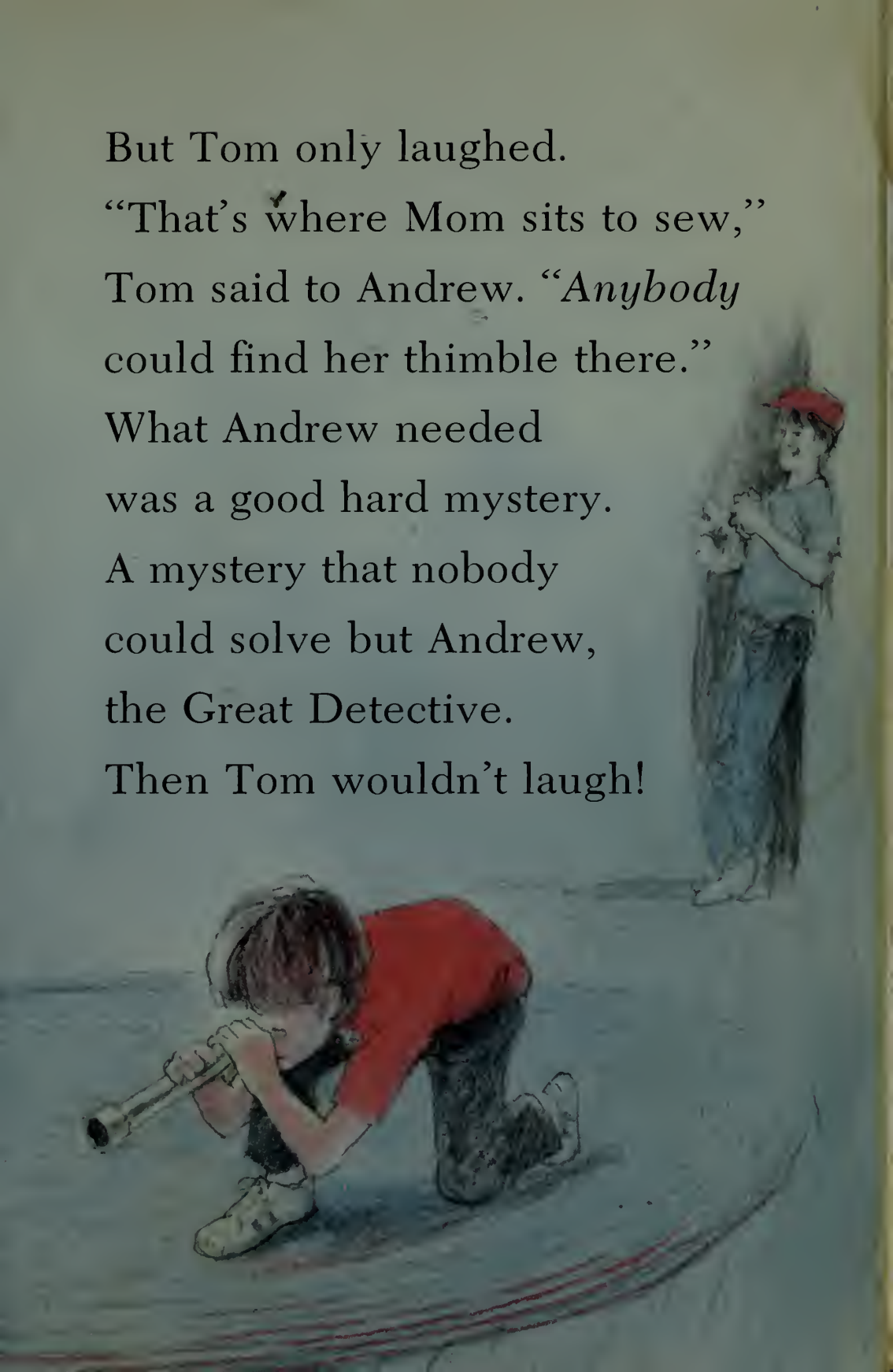
"Good luck," Tom called.
Tom was sitting
on the porch railing.
He almost fell off leaning
out to call to Andrew.

All week Andrew was a detective.
He solved a mystery
for Mrs. Pickett across the street.
Someone was eating the tulips
that grew in her yard.
Andrew sat in a tree and watched
the tulips through his spyglass.

By and by a white rabbit came
through Mrs. Pickett's fence.
The rabbit started to eat a tulip.
Andrew reported to Mrs. Pickett.
"You are a great detective,"
Mrs. Pickett said.

Then Andrew solved the mystery of his mother's missing thimble.
He looked all around the house with his spyglass.
He found the thimble under the rocking chair by the window.

But Tom only laughed.
"That's where Mom sits to sew,"
Tom said to Andrew. "*Anybody*
could find her thimble there."
What Andrew needed
was a good hard mystery.
A mystery that nobody
could solve but Andrew,
the Great Detective.
Then Tom wouldn't laugh!

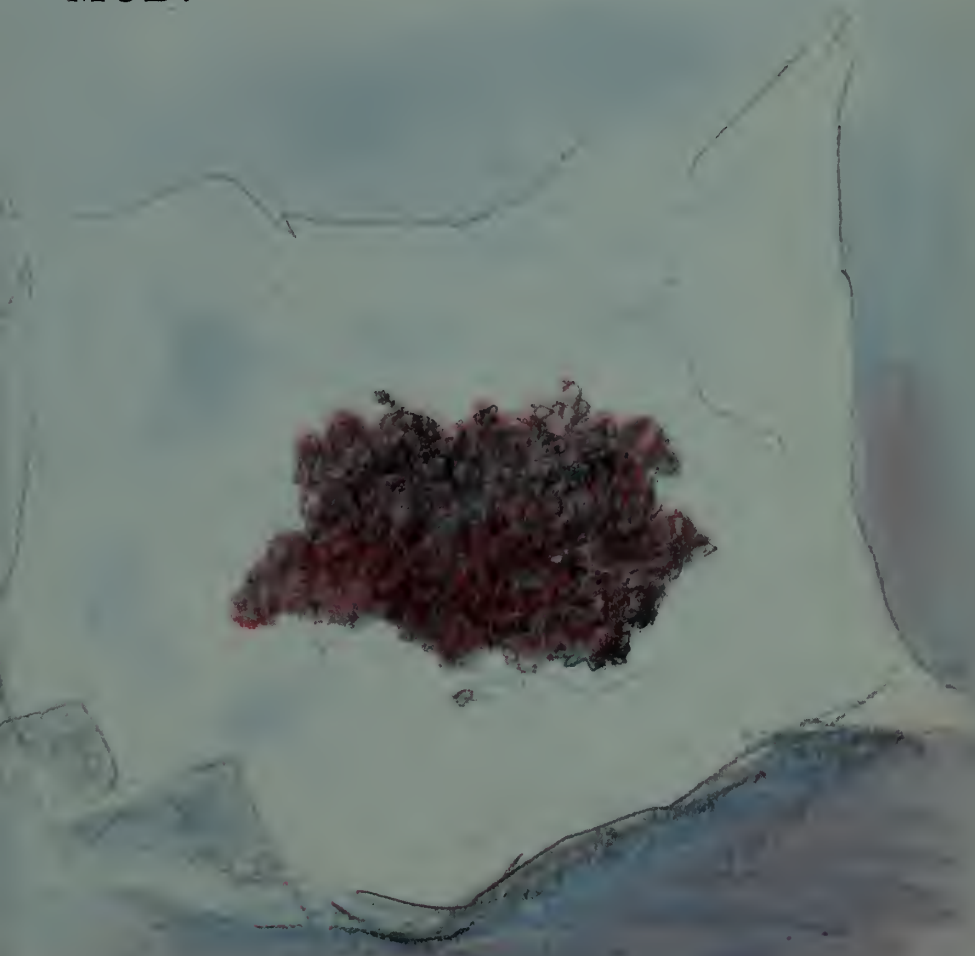


One morning, as Andrew
was getting dressed,
he couldn't get his foot
into his left shoe.
His right shoe had
gone on easily enough.
Was Andrew's left foot growing
bigger than his right foot?
Andrew had never heard
of anybody with one big foot
and one little foot.
Andrew pushed and pushed.
But his left foot would not go
all the way into his shoe.

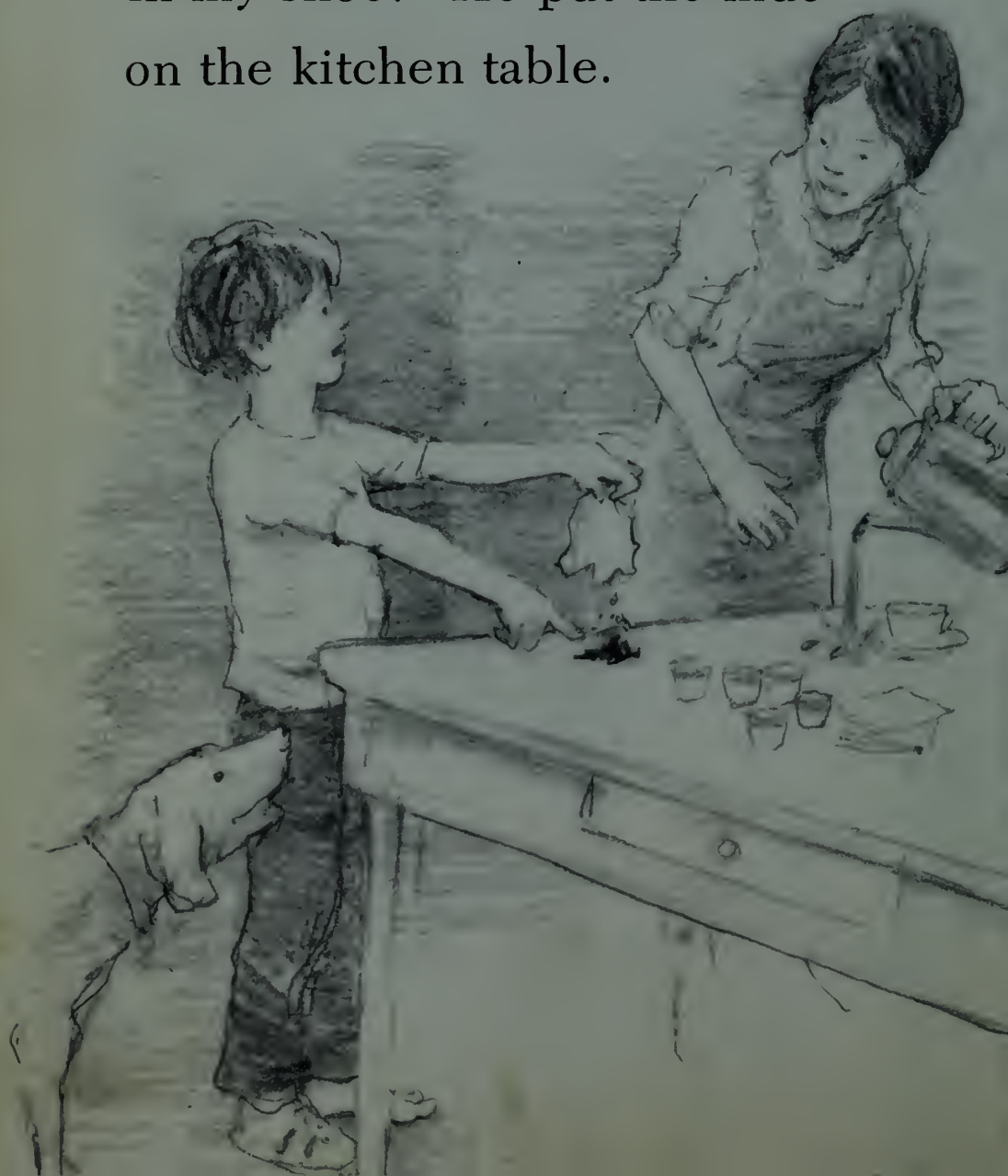
He took off the shoe
and looked inside.

In the toe of the shoe was a small package wrapped in tissue paper. Andrew opened the package. Inside was a big glob of

MUD.

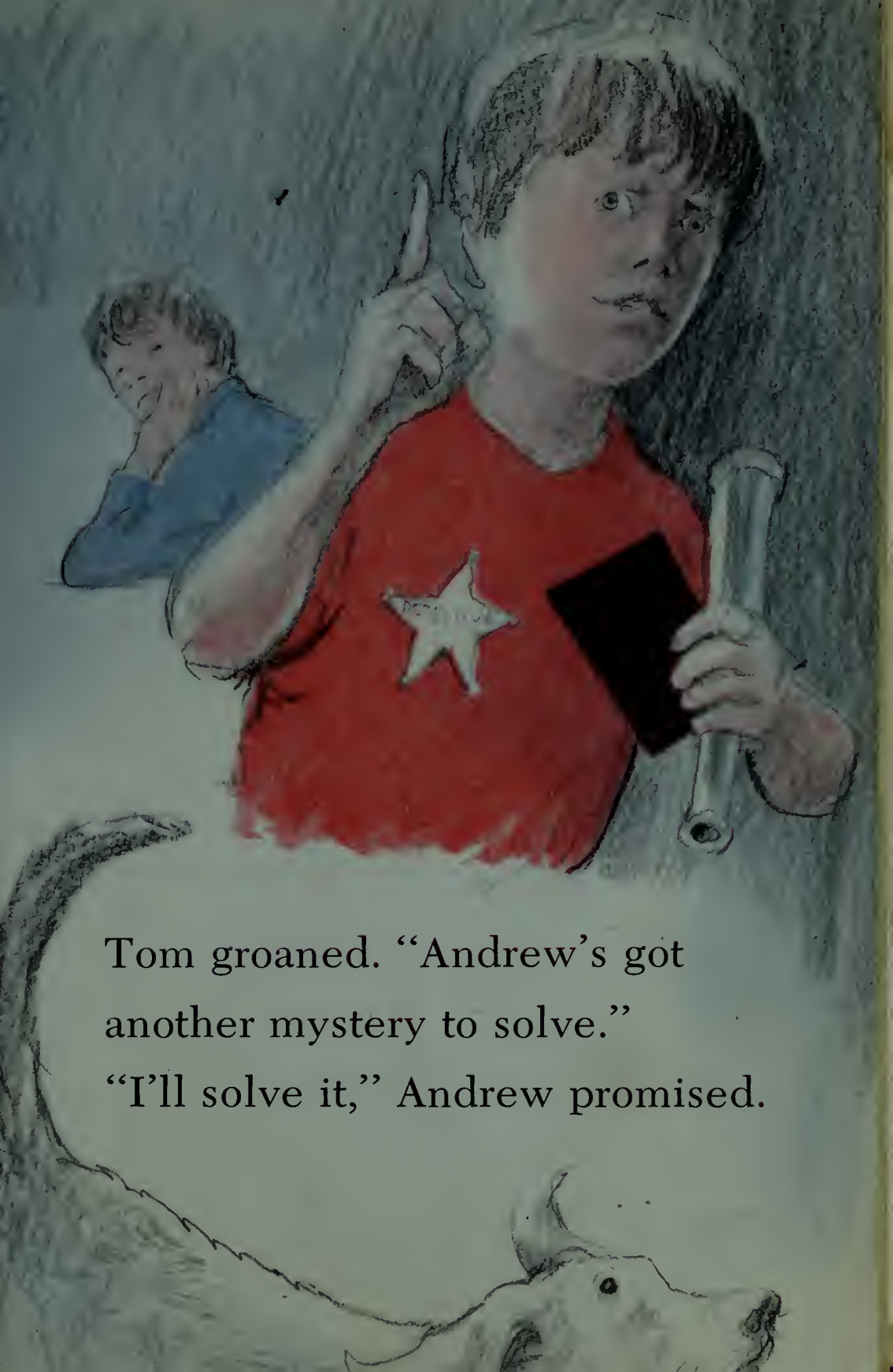


Andrew ran downstairs
one shoe off and one shoe on.
"Hey, Mom, look what I found—
in my shoe!" He put the mud
on the kitchen table.



Tom and Elizabeth were
eating pancakes.
"I didn't get any mud in *my* shoe
this morning," Tom complained.
"Neither did I," Elizabeth said.

Andrew's mother looked at the mud.
"Now that's a mystery,
isn't it?" she said.
Andrew's father looked at the mud.
"Yes, that's
a mystery all right," he agreed.

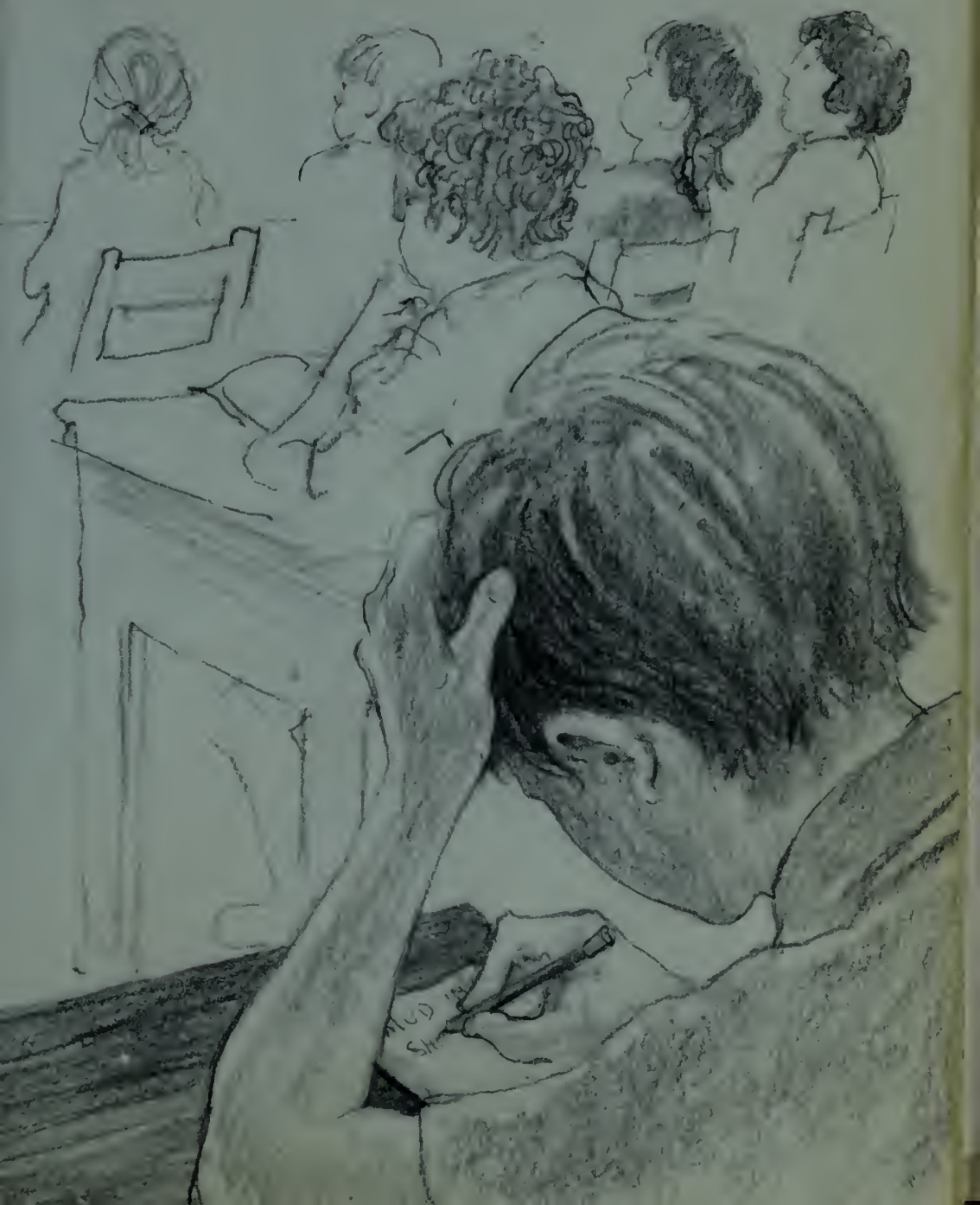


Tom groaned. "Andrew's got another mystery to solve."

"I'll solve it," Andrew promised.

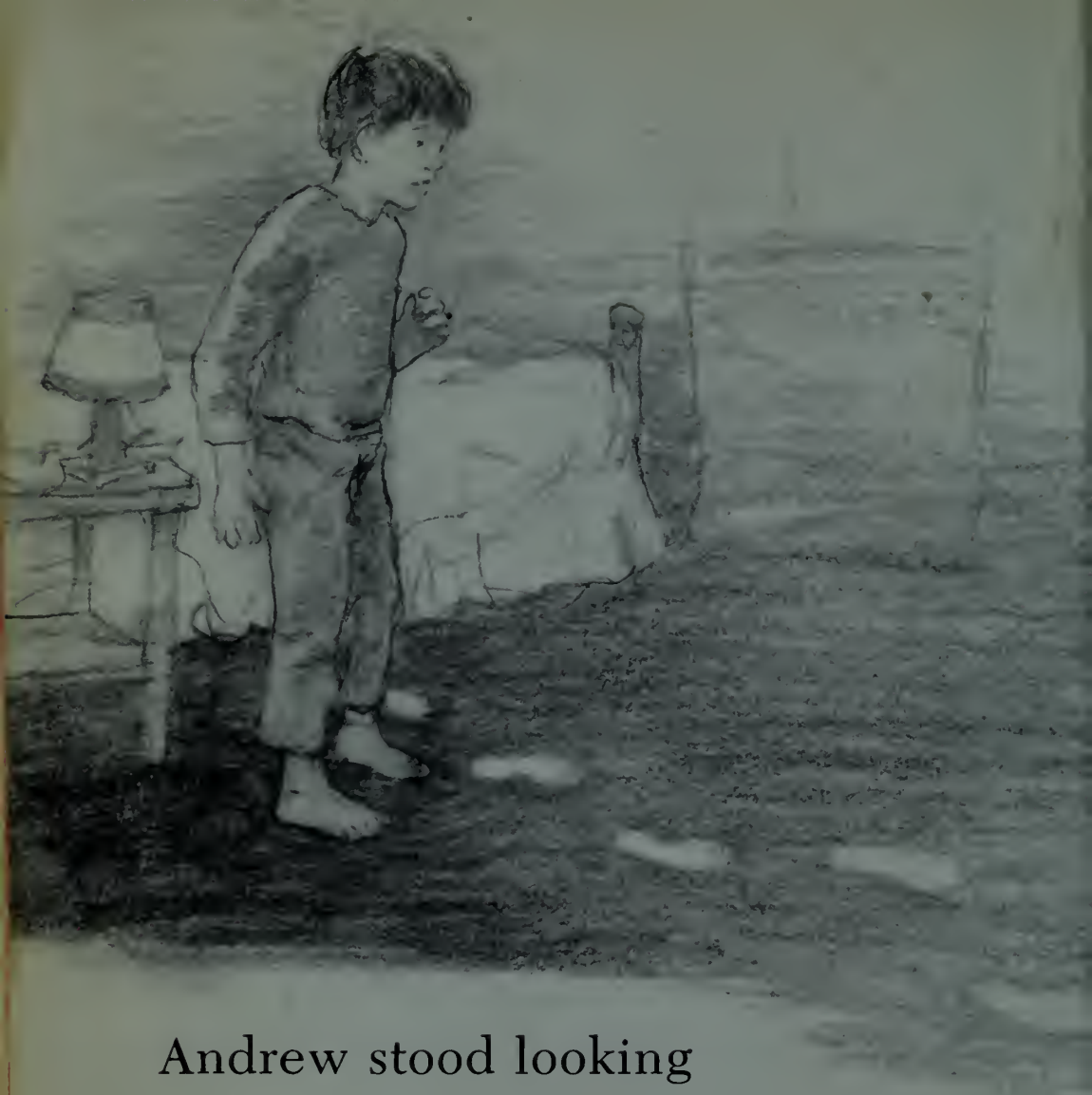
All day Andrew thought about
how a paper full of mud
could get in his shoe.
He wrote MUD IN SHOE
in his small black notebook.
It was a clue.

But it didn't help
solve the mystery.



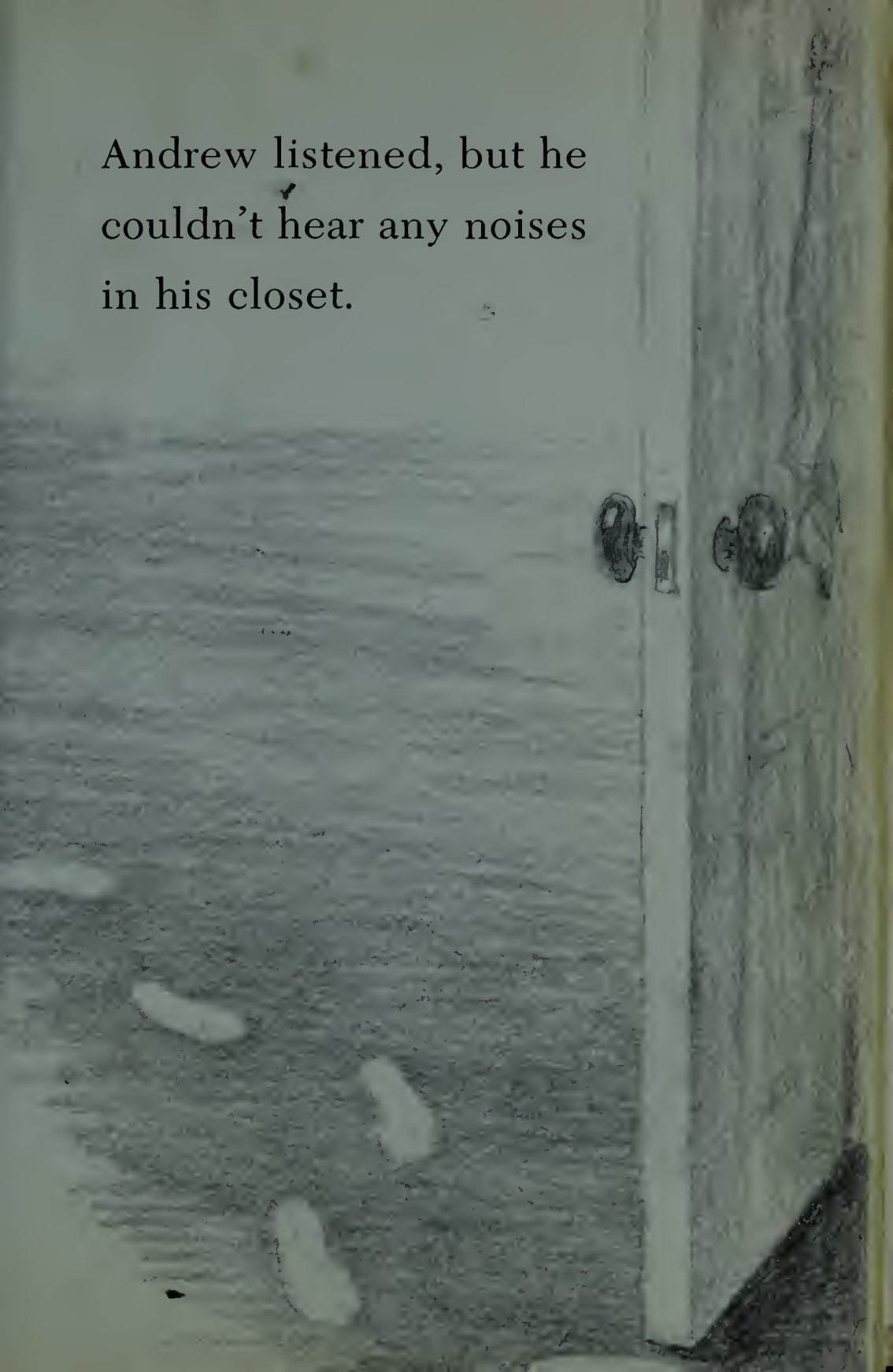
The next morning Andrew wondered
if he would find
anything in his shoes.

But he could not find
his shoes at all.
They were not beside the bed,
where he had put them
the night before.
And then, as Andrew looked around,
he saw a trail of white
footprints leading to his closet.
The footprints went into
the closet and disappeared.



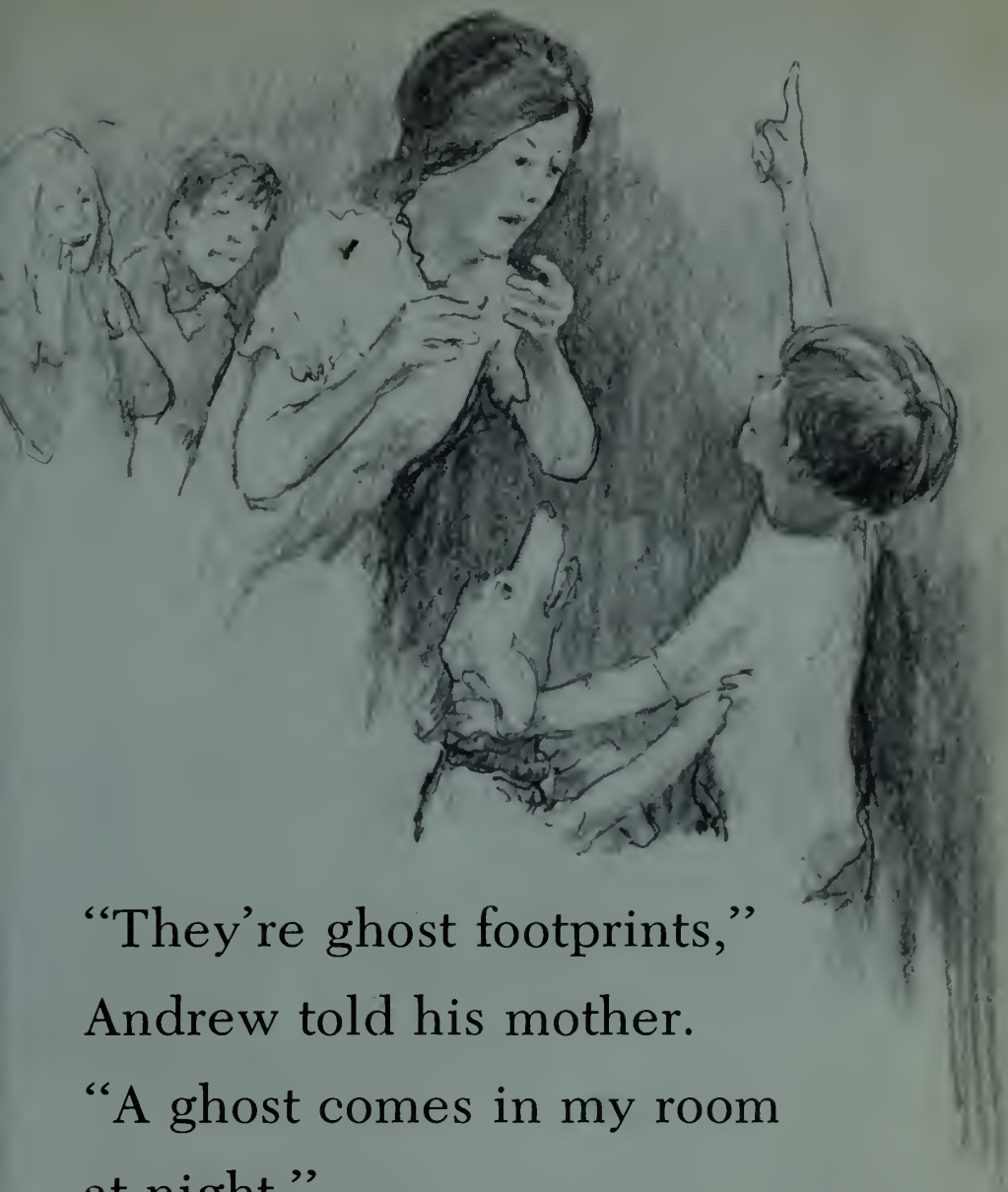
Andrew stood looking
at the footprints, and he began
to have a strange feeling.
His closet door was slightly open,
but he could not see inside.
Was someone there?

Andrew listened, but he couldn't hear any noises in his closet.



He pushed the door
a little farther open—
and then a little farther.
Finally it was all the way open.
The footprints went across
the closet floor,
and there were Andrew's shoes
at the end of the trail
of footprints!

Andrew rubbed at the white footprints, and they disappeared. Like ghost footprints!



"They're ghost footprints,"
Andrew told his mother.
"A ghost comes in my room
at night."
"A ghost!" Elizabeth laughed.
"You can't catch a ghost,"
Tom said, "so you'll never
solve this mystery."

That night
Andrew couldn't get to sleep.
He kept wondering how
mud got in his shoe.
And how the white
footprints got on his floor.

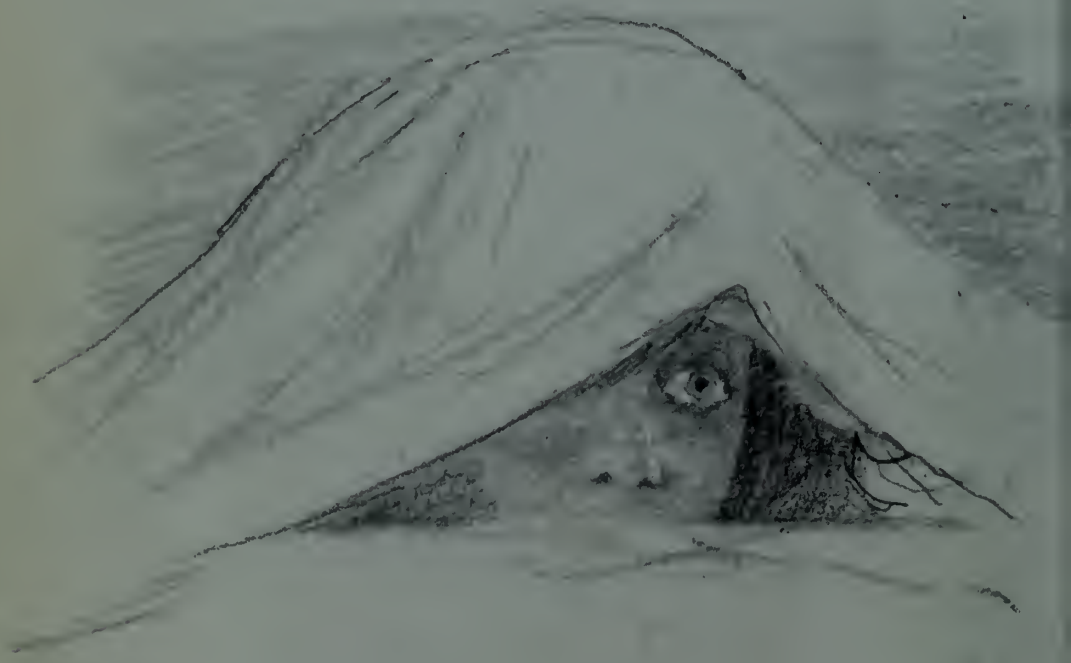
And how
he could solve these mysteries.
If only he could catch the ghost. . . .
But how could anyone catch a ghost?
Andrew grew sleepier and sleepier.

He was just about to fall
asleep when he heard his
bedroom door opening.
Andrew peeked out
from the top of his covers.
He wasn't sure whether he wanted
to see a ghost or not.
But it was too dark
to see anything!
Everything was quiet.

Then Andrew heard the sound of footsteps coming across his bedroom floor.
Thump. . . . Thump. . . .
The footsteps were coming toward his bed.
Andrew pulled the sheet all the way up over his head.

The footsteps stopped
at the foot of the bed.
Then Andrew heard them
going away again.

He heard his bedroom door closing. There was not another sound in the whole dark house, except the pounding of Andrew's heart. By and by Andrew peeked out from his covers.



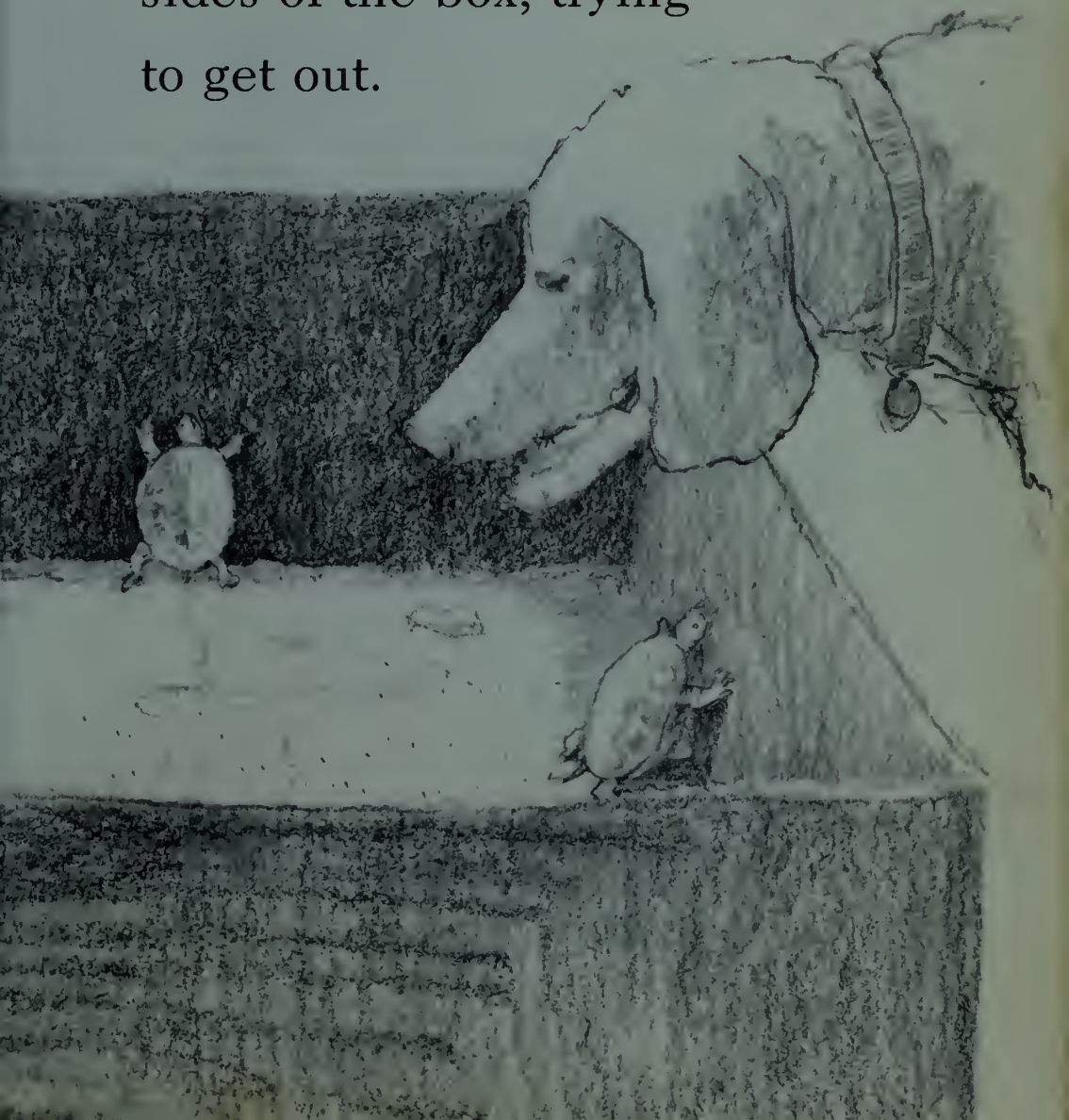
The bedroom door was closed. The ghost was gone.

The first thing Andrew saw
when he opened his eyes
the next morning was a brown
cardboard box on the floor
near his bed.

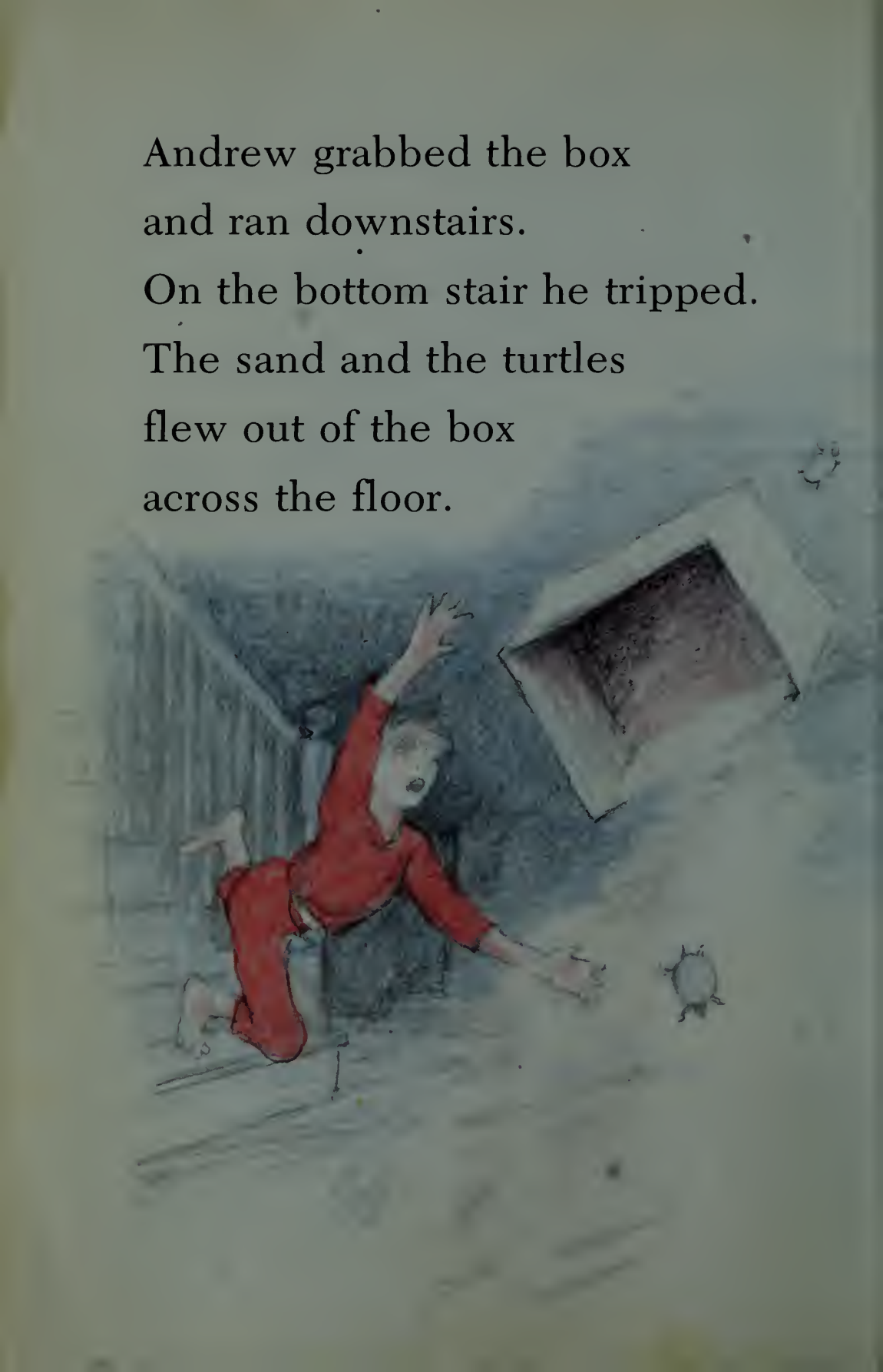
It was strange to see
a cardboard box
in the middle of the floor.
It was scary, too, because
Andrew could hear
scratching noises inside the box.
It made the skin prickle
on his arms.
At last Andrew got up.
He took a step toward the box.
He waited.

Then he took another step.
And another.
And then he leaned forward
very, very slowly—
and looked into the box.

It was filled with sand.
Two small green
turtles were inside.
They were scratching at the
sides of the box, trying
to get out.

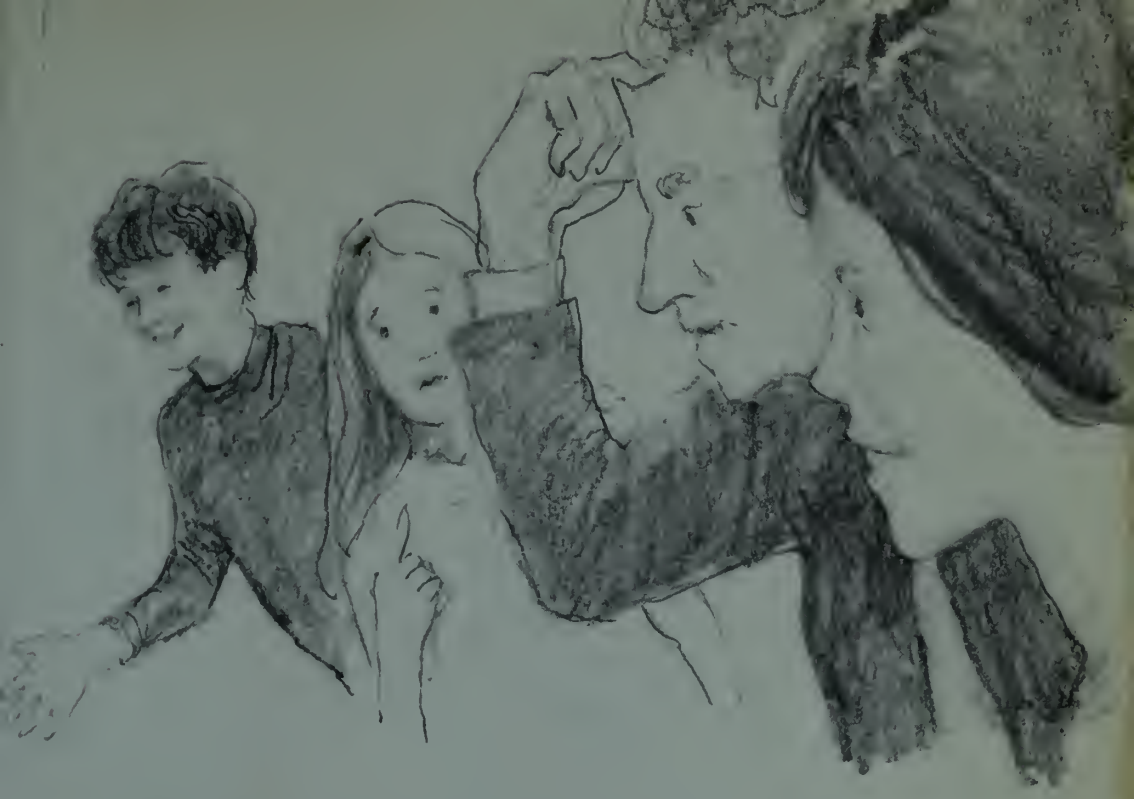


Andrew grabbed the box
and ran downstairs.
On the bottom stair he tripped.
The sand and the turtles
flew out of the box
across the floor.



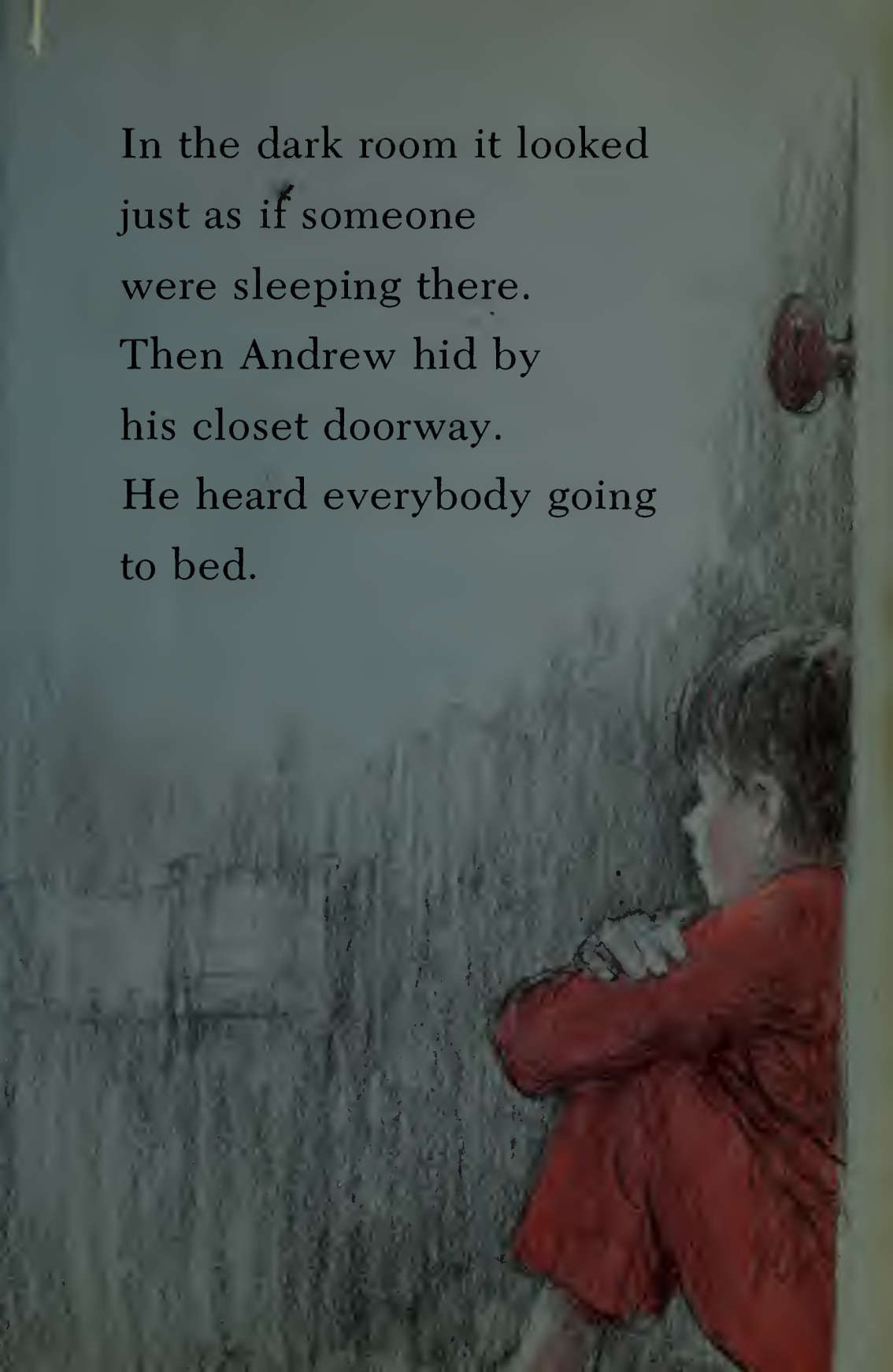
His mother came running
to see what had happened.
And there was Andrew on the floor
in the middle of the sand.

"Are you hurt?"
Andrew's mother asked first.
"A ghost comes at midnight,"
Andrew shouted.
"This time it brought me turtles—
just what I've always wanted."



"How would a ghost know that?"
Tom asked.
Elizabeth said, "I wish the
ghost would bring *me* something."
"Your mystery is getting more
and more mysterious,"
his father said.
Andrew's mother said, "We'll
have to get a turtle bowl."

That night Andrew made up
his mind to catch
the Midnight Ghost.
He had a good hard mystery
to solve, and he would solve it!
He didn't even get into bed.
He stuffed his pillow
under the blanket.



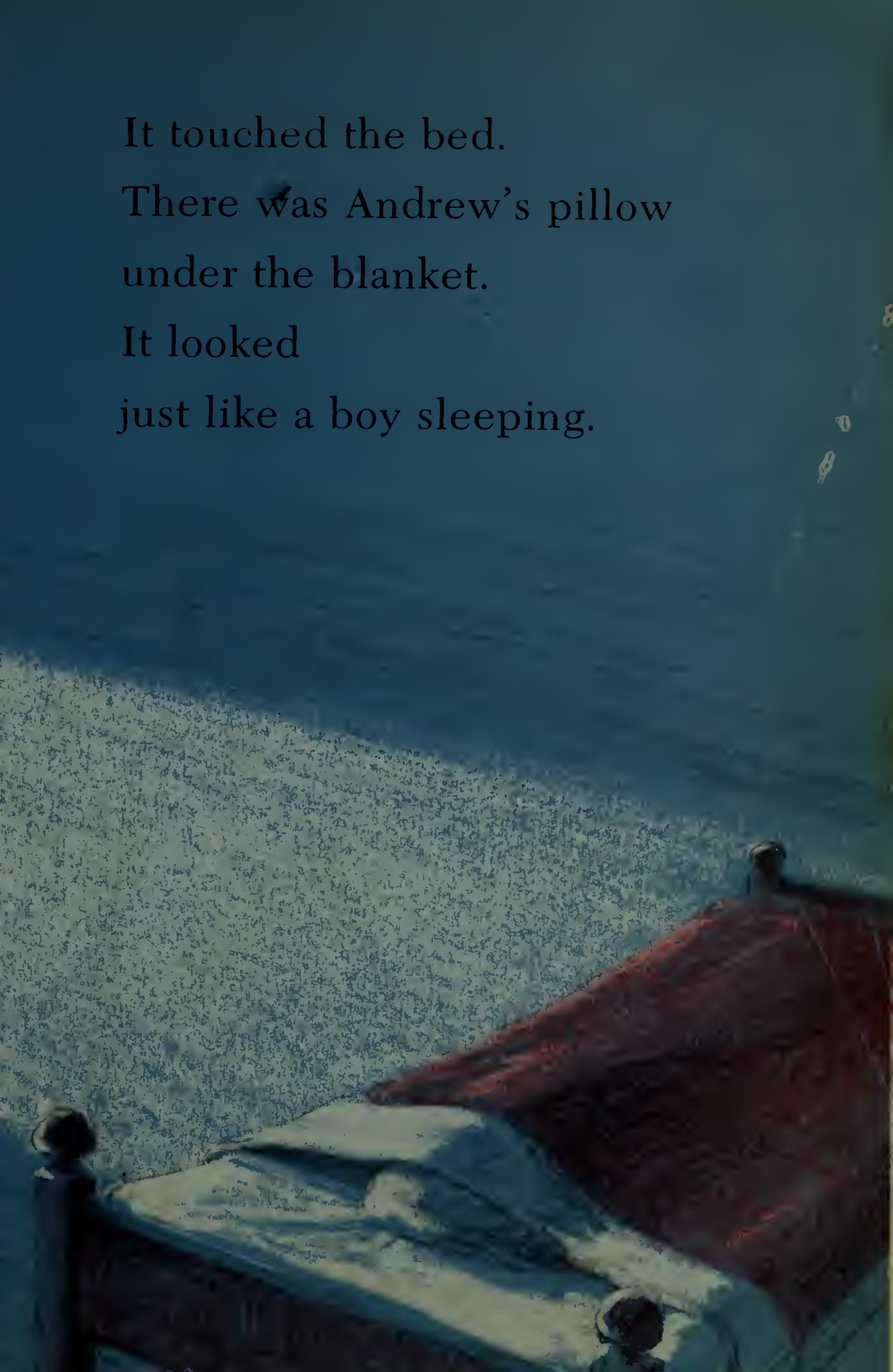
In the dark room it looked
just as if someone
were sleeping there.
Then Andrew hid by
his closet doorway.
He heard everybody going
to bed.

He heard his mother walk
by his room.
Then everything in the
house got quiet.
Everybody was asleep but Andrew.
He sat very still
in the darkness.
It seemed as if hours and
hours passed.

And then at last his bedroom
door opened a crack.
Andrew shrank back
closer to the closet doorway.

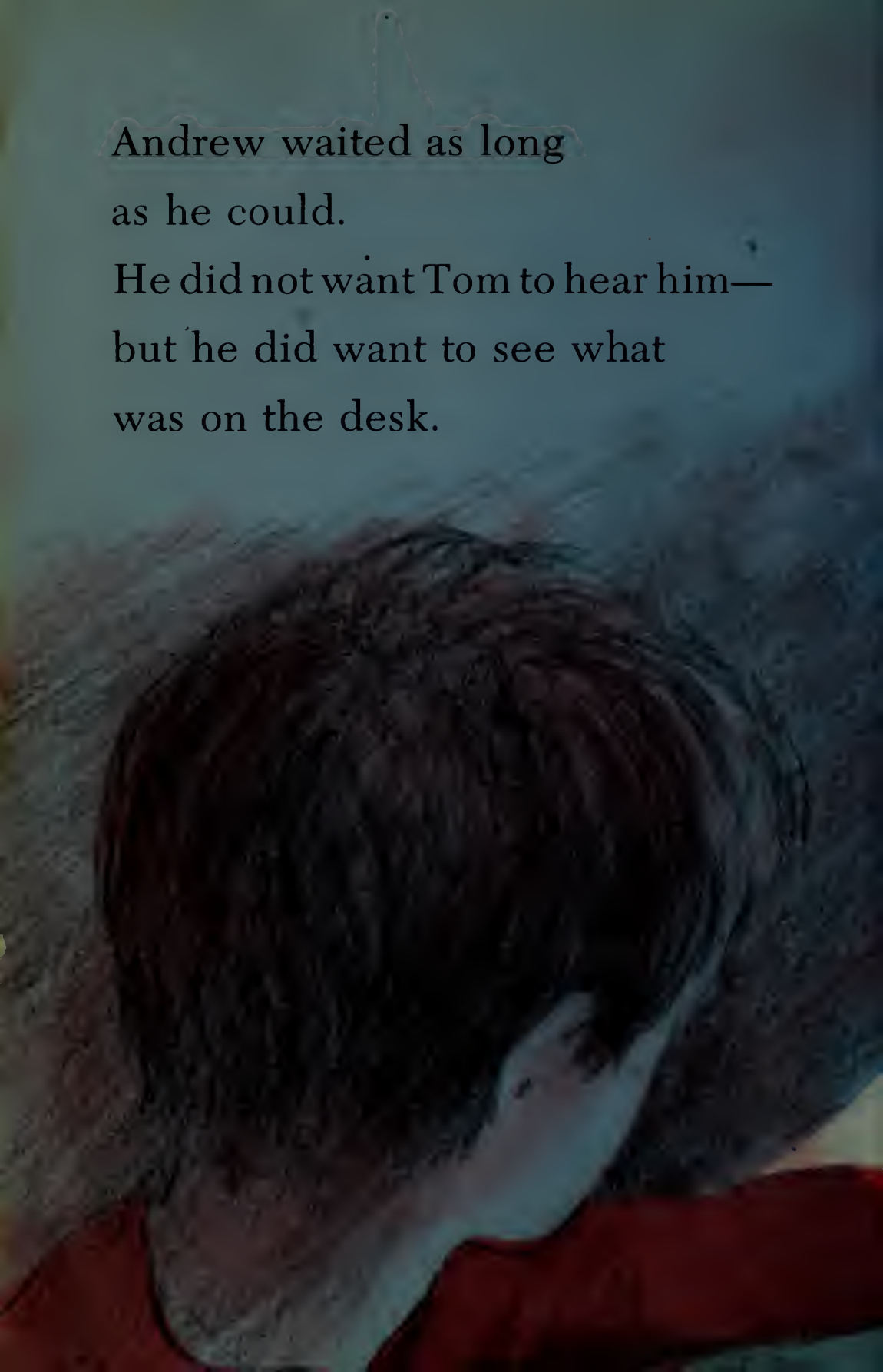
A long beam of light
came across the floor.
A flashlight beam.

It touched the bed.
There was Andrew's pillow
under the blanket.
It looked
just like a boy sleeping.

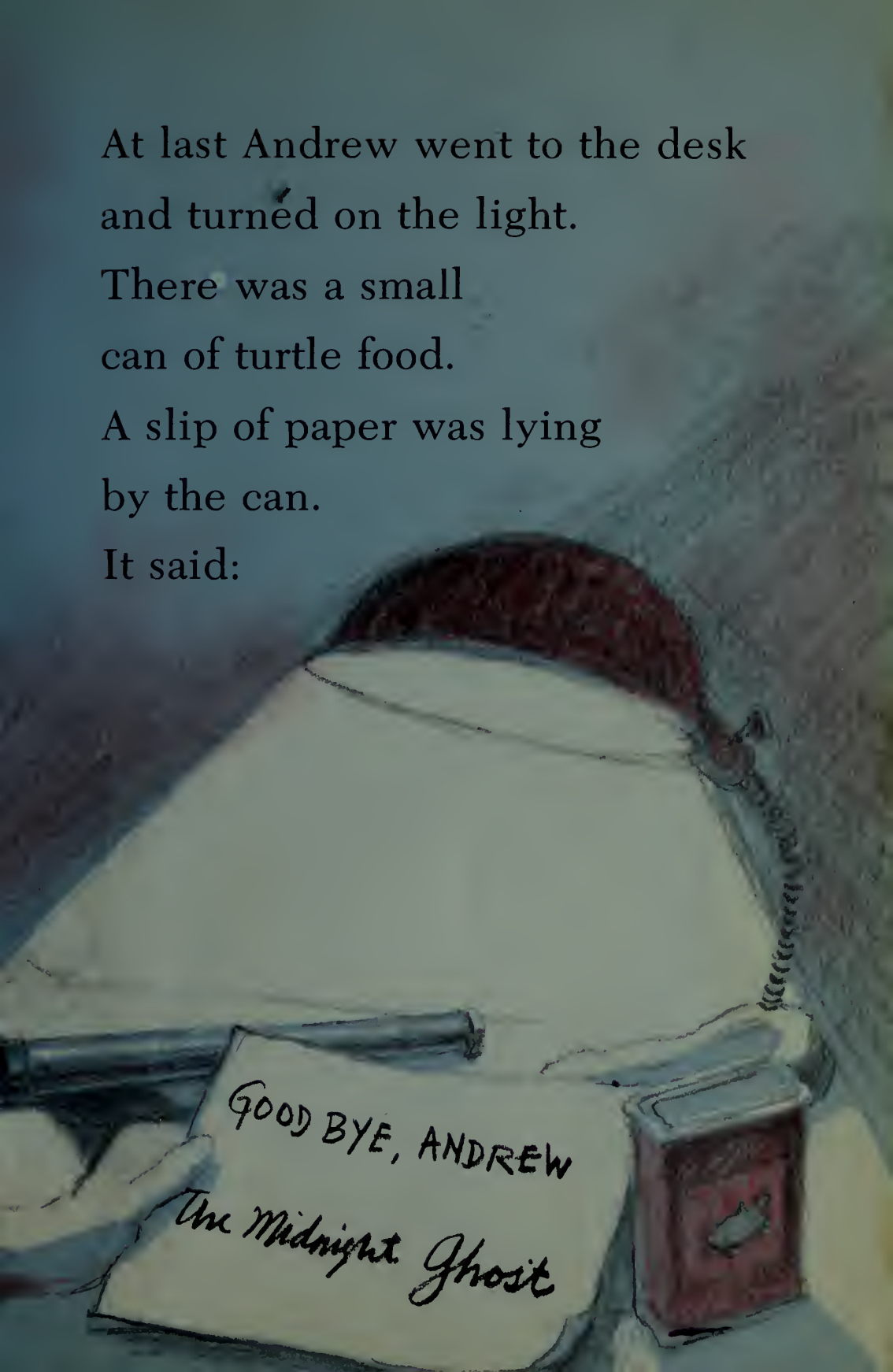


Then someone came into the room
and walked toward Andrew's desk.
It was *Tom!*
Andrew did not make a sound.
Tom tiptoed back to the door
and went out.
The door closed softly.

Andrew waited as long
as he could.
He did not want Tom to hear him—
but he did want to see what
was on the desk.



At last Andrew went to the desk
and turned on the light.
There was a small
can of turtle food.
A slip of paper was lying
by the can.
It said:



The next morning Andrew did not tell anybody that he had seen Tom.

He showed everybody the turtle food and the note.

"I guess the ghost isn't coming anymore," he said.

"I knew you couldn't solve
that mystery," Tom said.
But Andrew only smiled.
That night, before he went to bed,
Andrew wrote a note.

He crushed up the note into
a big crinkly ball and put it
in the toe of one of Tom's
clean socks.
He knew Tom would
find it in the morning.
The note said:

DEAR MIDNIGHT
GHOST

THank you for
the turtles.

Andrew
The Great Detec-
tive

About the Author

Carol Beach York was born in Chicago, Illinois, and attended schools in Chicago and in Harvey, Illinois, where she and her daughter Diana now make their home.

Mrs. York's most recent book for young readers is *The Tree House Mystery.*

About the Artist

Charles Robinson has illustrated more than 40 books for young readers, including *The Pup with the Up and Down Tail* and *The Terrible Wave.*

Charles Robinson, his wife Cynthia, and their three children live in New Vernon, New Jersey.

About the Series

Boys and girls who are just beginning to read on their own will find the Break-of-Day books enjoyable and easy to read. Lively, fresh stories that are far ranging and varied in content combine with attractive illustrations. Large, clear type and simple language, but without vocabulary controls, keep the stories readable and fun.

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